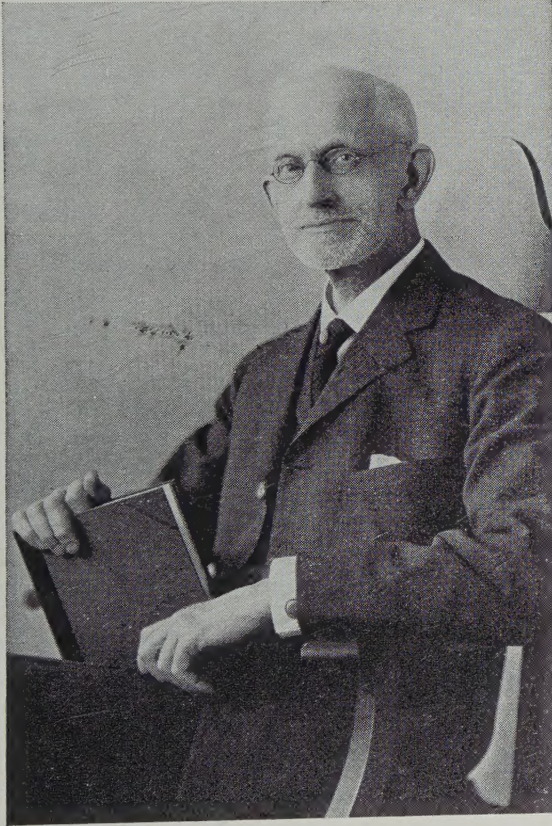


# The Hymn

APRIL 1955



WALDO SELDEN PRATT  
1857 - 1939

# Waldo Selden Pratt

1857-1939

WALDO SELDEN PRATT, MUS. D., L.H.D., Charter Member of the Hymn Society of America, was an innovator in every department of study to which he devoted his leadership.

In his twenty-fifth year he was appointed to teach ecclesiastical music and hymnology in Hartford Theological Seminary, where he remained throughout his entire teaching career. His courses in sight singing, musical notation, part singing, harmony, hymnology, public worship, were supplemented by his public lectures, editorial functions, published articles and books. As Professor of Public Worship, Dr. Pratt opened up the possibilities of liturgical, musicological, educational and historical investigation as they were related to his chosen field. Through the years he developed and enriched his knowledge and convictions, exerting an influence felt far beyond the limits of the Seminary.

Upon occasion, he was called upon to lecture at Mount Holyoke and Smith Colleges, Cornell University, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, and frequently at the Institute of Musical Art in New York.

The bibliography of his published writings, seventy-eight in number, reveals an active contributor to scholarly periodicals, a public speaker in demand where the center of interest lay in the musical elements of public worship, an editor of musical reference works, a compiler of hymnic collections, a musicologist and historian of music, in short, an educator who charted the path and at the same time, provided the tools for a generation of ministers, musicians and laymen.

Dr. Pratt taught the unquestioned importance of the hymn in the theory and practice of Protestant worship. In his personal studies, he chose the Early Protestant Psalmody of the French Calvinists. From this special knowledge, he addressed the Hymn Society at its decennial celebration, 1932, on "The Significance of the Old French Psalter," later published as Paper IV of *The Papers of the Hymn Society of America*.

Dr. Pratt was the author of the following books.

*History of Music: a Handbook*. N. Y., Schirmer, 1907.

*Music of the French Psalter*. N. Y., Columbia Univ. Press, 1939.

*The Music of the Pilgrims*. Boston, Oliver Ditson, c. 1921.

*Musical Ministries in the Church*. N. Y., Schirmer, 1901-1923.

*New Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, N. Y., Macmillan, 1924.



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## The Editor's Column

### "DRESSING UP THE HYMNS"

The Editor has received a number of letters from readers with various reactions to the program, "Thy Kingdom Come," heard on the NBC Radio Network every Saturday at 6:30 P.M. Several have written of their pleasure in hearing a program of this importance which was featuring great hymns of the church. Others have protested at the attempts to "dress up" the hymns—by means of rather florid instrumental arrangements—somewhat reminiscent of the efforts of rather notorious revival programs emanating from Oklahoma and Oregon.

A letter from the Editor to the chairman of the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ brought a prompt and courteous reply from a member of the committee. In it was the statement that Mr. Harriss Hubble, a Baptist layman and professional musician, had brought a "larger concept" of the use of brass arrangements of hymns to the committee which had in turn found support for such a broadcast from the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. The letter conceded that criticism had come from church musicians, but went on to say that "station acceptance of the series—at least 102 NBC stations—and the audience mail which is 98% laudatory—indicates the interest of the listeners."

The Editor takes a dim view of such a criterion for judging the quality of the music used on any program. Inclosed with the letter was the script for the January 29, 1955 broadcast, which included the following hymns: "Lead on, O King Eternal," "Saviour, like a shepherd," "Faith of our Fathers," "O Word of God Incarnate," "I love to tell the story," "O Jesus, I have promised," "Take my life, and let it be," and "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Perhaps this represents a typical program. We hope not. It is lacking in any of the great chorale tunes (and not *just* Bach chorales); there is no evidence of some of the more virile hymns of the universal church, and certainly nothing representative of the present century's contribution to the church's song. None of the vigorous Scottish Psalter texts or tunes are represented, to say nothing of the legacy of plainsong. The tunes which are "dressed up" are almost in every case the most familiar ones, with no evident regard for some of the fine, vigorous alternates which are being learned and appreciated in many congregations.

(Continued on page 56)



# The Organist's Relation To Hymn Tunes and Hymn Singing

WALDO SELDEN PRATT

*This paper, originally read at the Springfield Convention of the National Association of Organists, August 3, 1915, is here published for the first time, by permission of the Hartford Seminary Foundation.*

Mr. Edward H. Jobe, Organist and Choirmaster of the First Congregational Church of Columbus, Ohio, who read the manuscript at the request of the Editors, writes as follows: "In my opinion, the paper is worth re-printing in its entirety. I think the paper offers an excellent opportunity to observe how far we may or may not have progressed in the matter of hymn playing . . . Dr. Pratt's points are the vital ones and he covers each one so meaningfully and with so much understanding . . . The thought on page 44 is worth proclaiming. "The basic virtue in an organist when he plays tunes is the ability to think what he is playing in terms of song."

**I**T IS RATHER the fashion among organists to think that nothing significant can be said about that part of their work which has to do with hymns. Hymns and tunes are simply a feature in the routine of church work - inevitable, but not to be emphasized. Some organists are so engrossed with what pertains to choirs or to recitals that there is not room for much else. A few of them cherish a positive distaste for hymn tunes and for congregational singing. Many organ teachers give no special attention to tune playing or hymn leading, regarding it as relatively unimportant or uninteresting, or as something that anyone can do who is trained in other ways. Hence it comes about that a large proportion of organists are notoriously weak in this department - unskillful and even inaccurate, tasteless, ineffective and totally uninspiring. Under their mismanagement hymn singing struggles along in a half-hearted way or comes near to extinction. In such cases, of course, hymns and tunes appear to be fairly empty of value as compared with some other things. But such cases do not prove that the emptiness is essential or even reputable.

It is true that this indifference of organists is not the whole story. Naturally, the direction in the choice of hymns and tunes falls more to the minister than as concerns any other division of church music. There are well-grounded complaints in many quar-

ters that ministers do not give hymn singing a fair chance - that they limit it to a stupid rut, or rob it of its dignity by pursuing silly trash, or thwart the organist's well-meaning efforts at practical improvement. Organists are not by any means the only ones to blame for some of the troubles and neglects.

But my function here today is not to talk about all sides of the matter, but simply about the organist's relation to it.

Several distinct topics present themselves. Since the use of hymns, set to tunes, is customary in almost all churches, it is the business of the trained organist to be reasonably familiar with the nature and evolution of hymnody - a subject which is only indirectly musical. This suggests an argument or disquisition regarding the historical, literary and religious significance of any average hymn book of the better class. This is Topic No. 1. Somewhat allied to this is another, concerning the intention and possibilities of hymn singing as a feature in religious worship - a subject which, again, is only partly musical. This would take us off into some interesting paths in the history of the church and in the theory of public worship. This is Topic No. 2.

Then there is a parallel question as to the nature and evolution of tunes. Here there can be no question about the duty of the church musician. It is plainly his business to know more about the range of tune literature than all except those in his own class, and to have rational opinions about the kinds of composition that form the literature, as well as about the leading writers and influences that have made it what it is. This is Topic No. 3. To this follows naturally a question as to all the technical problems of so playing tunes that their full value shall be brought out and the singing of them by congregations shall be both possible and inevitable. Here, once more, is a matter of plain duty. No organist can pass muster anywhere who cannot play tunes both well and invitingly. And yet here is just where a multitude of organists of repute break down egregiously and pathetically. This is Topic No. 4.

Beyond this lies still another matter - the problem of setting up devices by which the singing capacity of a given congregation and its interest in the act of singing may be increased. Too many organists utterly disdain this item in their official program, even when they declaim loudly over the inability or sluggishness of those whom they do nothing to help. This is Topic No. 5. Very likely there are still other topics which ought to be mentioned. But these are surely enough, if not too much, for us today.



It seems to me that it will be most practical for us to keep mainly to two or three of these topics, touching upon the rest only incidentally. But, even in doing this, let us not forget that this subject is no mean subject, and that it really merits being made a separate course of study in many an institution and studio that pretends to train church organists. I am glad to say that I notice signs that thoughtful students in our profession are waking up to its interest and its value. The sooner the rank and file follow their lead, the better for the efficiency and repute of practical church music everywhere.

This is not the place or time to go into details in the interesting history of the Protestant hymn tune. It is a distinct type of composition, resting back upon a folk-song foundation, no doubt, but gradually evolved until it has become, in its strongest development, considerably moved from the naiveté of its prototype. The evolutions have been diverse in connection with the three branches of Protestantism. The Lutheran chain of chorales differed from that of the Reformed church from the beginning, and the Anglican tunes, though at first connected with the latter, have gone on adding features until they are now far distant from both. Here in America all churches have been greatly affected by a fourth tendency, which, at bottom, is a sort of new infusion of folk-song material, but which has had curious outgrowths, many of which are really degenerate and injurious. The last element is often described by some single name, like "Gospel Hymns," as if they were all of a single class, although probably, within the general group, two or three tendencies or types can be distinguished. The disdain of most musicians toward this group is shown by the habit in these days of calling it all "ragtime music." I heard not long ago of a young German who dubbed it "saloon song," simply because it reminded him of the drinking songs of German students. But all such titles of derision are more or less unjust to the older and better stratum in this popular and emotional type of tune.

We cannot here stop for any details about this or any other great class of tune. The point that is important is that, in any recent hymnal of importance, you will find examples of all classes heaped together without distinction, just as you find examples of every school of hymn writing, often from as many as twenty or more denominations. All periods and all styles are drawn upon freely in accordance with the editor's notion of what is most available for his purpose. And the miscellany of the editor's choice

is then passed through the sieve of some minister's or organist's personal preference, or of some congregation's heedless prejudice - and you get, as a net result, the actual "use" or ritual in tunes of a particular church.

It is in regard to this actual "use" in a particular place that I think every practical organist has duties. He ought to be as keenly alive to the differences between classes here as to the differences between a Prelude of Bach and an Offertoire of Wély, or between one of Henry Smart's virile pieces and the milk-and-water "Berceuses" and "Idylles" that are eternally issuing from the musical press. He ought to be able to respond cordially to *all* that is good and rich in any of them - from the massive harmony of the better samples of the chorale style, through the extremely elastic and animated part-songs or glees of the later English school, even to the more substantial of the recent "popular" tunes like "Faith of our fathers" [ST. CATHERINE] or "O Zion, haste" [TIDINGS]. He should be cordial and responsive, but with due discrimination, just as he is on other branches of musical criticism and exposition. If he approves, it should be for reasons that can be stated. And if he disapproves, it should also be for reasons that can not only be stated, but be made clear to the average mind.

This line of remark leads directly into another. If tunes differ widely in nature, then it follows that there is no one way in which they should be rendered as musical compositions. A good many years ago I stumbled on an advertisement of a small manual by a Western organist that professed to give expert directions for playing hymn tunes. I sent for it at once. But it proved to be positively idiotic in its fundamental idea. The writer was an exponent of the exploded notion that all organ playing must be *legatissimo* all the time, and that all tunes must be laid on this bed and made to fit it, whether or no. Of course, with some players this idea needs reinforcement, and one who cannot do all that was demanded in this pamphlet would do as well to practice till he can. But the habit of always binding everything together into a smooth, formless mass of solid tone does violence to the structure of many tunes.

What is more fruitful is to emphasize the idea that all tunes are essentially *vocal*, made to sing, adjusted to words, controlled by choral effects. When they are put upon an instrument, like the organ, they require such treatment as will exhibit their vocal structure and provoke vocal rendering. The basic virtue in an organist when he plays tunes is ability to think what he is playing in terms



of song. And the song which he is imitating is not solo song, having individuality and movement in all the parts. It is a hard struggle to get pupils to see this, and a harder one to get them to do the requisite practice to represent it with their fingers and feet. It necessitates a somewhat adequate grasp of the whole subject of Harmony, including not a little of rudimentary Counterpoint. They think it stupid to require them to play all sorts of combinations of two parts till they can do it with utter freedom. They fumble indefinitely over exchanging the notes of the tenor between the two hands. They have to be broken of the crude habit of kicking in some of the bass notes once in a while and skipping the rest. They aspire to play all sorts of recital pieces before they have learned to reckon with an English part-song, like Dykes' setting of "I heard the voice of Jesus say," with full recognition of the fact that every one of the four voice parts is a complete, expressive and telling melody, and the tune, as a whole is a consummate piece of contrapuntal declamation. It is true that there is nothing here that is not really involved in the adequate treatment of dozens of pure organ pieces. The problem of melodic continuity in each part, with the playing of one part against another, is not essentially different in the two cases. But my observation is that the problem is seldom well solved as respects tunes unless the player has a somewhat vivid sense of real choral effects to aid him - unless he thinks the tunes as if actually sung by a company of singers.

Still another technical point needs to be made - one that seems somewhat opposed to the foregoing. In most tunes there is some proportion of effects which depend chiefly on the massive succession of chords as such. This is most conspicuous in the tunes of the chorale type. The harmony steps along from one positive chord to another with so much determination that it is possible to conceive the whole as nothing but a chord-series. The player must be ready to meet this class of effects with the zest of a harmonic expert, seizing the gist of the chord-chain with his mind and expressing it by handing out the tunes in virile handfuls. To gain this he must sometimes be drilled in a tedious set of exercises, until his hand is able to "talk" chords as big units of tone.

In connection with both of these points is a third - the readiness to adapt one's self freely to every variety of motive and phraselet that may appear. Tunes are commonly printed with the divisions that fit the lines of the hymns made emphatic by heavy bars. Usually these correspond to the larger rhythmic sections of the tune.

But in certain classes of tune the chief sections consist of two or even three lines. And in many tunes there are important subdivisions of the line, especially when the phrasing of the words is considered. One gets very tired of the utterly callous way in which otherwise good players march stolidly through certain tunes - like LANGRAN, for example - quite oblivious of the plain fact that the tune is susceptible of a variable phrasing that yields readily to the shifts in the phrasing of the successive verses.

All these points require to be combined with one more - attention to those tones or chords that should receive what we may call accent. There are players, of course, who grow up with the notion that the organ is an instrument upon which accent is more or less impossible. The dreary monotony of their interpretations reflects the flatness of their imagination. To a limited extent accent is possible through the use of the swell-pedal. But most of it is secured by sharpness of attack with the finger, and by unnoticed devices of delay before the note, of lingering on it or pause after it. By means of these devices, which are too small in absolute dimension to be noticed much by themselves, the comparatively lifeless and heartless treatment of tune materials may be suddenly lifted into positive distinction.

It is hardly worth spending time to say that none of these refinements in tune playing are possible unless the player has become acutely responsive to the large amount of musical beauty that is compressed and locked up in the better classes of tune, waiting to be disclosed and given tonal exposition. This responsiveness is usually secured only by becoming intimately acquainted with some hundreds of tunes, of many different kinds, and letting their inner significance fairly "soak" into your esthetic nature.

Of course, somewhere in this neighborhood, I must say something about the vexed question of the tempo at which tunes should be played. Every rational person knows that there is a "golden mean" in this matter. Habitual haste and habitual drawling are both atrocious. But what guide is there to the exact point between, where we should take our stand? A little later I am going to urge that some variations of tempo are needed to meet special exigencies. At this point I want to make only one or two remarks. The first of these is that the tempo of all tunes rests upon the easy tempo of the singing voice. Hence I do not believe that any organist can play tunes well who is not in the habit of singing himself, so that his conception of the tune is governed by the experience of using his voice. I even think that players should ha-



bitually sing as they play - at least while the tunes are being sung. This practice will go far toward correcting extremes in tempo, since haste will be felt to be breathless and dawdling will be felt to be stupid. But it is not the whole of the matter. I think it is clear that the different kinds of tune call for a distinctly different treatment. There is one tempo adapted to the stately chorale - EIN' FESTE BURG or ST. ANNE - and there is another adapted to the sprightly part-songs of the modern English school - like "The King of love my shepherd is." Just what treatment is to be given to a strongly melodic tune depends on the nature of the melody. Zundel's setting for "I was a wandering sheep" is a straight waltz-form that becomes an irreverent jig if crowded too fast. Morley's setting of "Those eternal bowers" is a dignified march that may be made a quick-step or a funeral procession with pitiful results in either case. The ideal is defined by subjecting the tune to vocal examination, using the precise words that are set to it, and having due regard both to vocal comfort in general and the choicest vocal expressiveness of the poetry. At this point a trained choir-singer may be of the utmost help to an organist, and the occasional use of hymn tunes as actual solos will yield useful suggestions for general playing.

At this point, as perhaps later, I must register the view that the tempo of tunes should be somewhat elastic. This notion is like a red rag to many players. Just those who are eager to give grace and vitality to other music by dexterous deviations from metronomic regularity will sometimes insist that hymn tunes must be played as if ground out by a barrel organ. All I can say is that I do not agree with this view. Indeed, I think that it is often the main cause of practical failure with hymn singing. Of course, if a player cannot play in strict time, he must learn how, and he must beware about falling into silly mannerisms, but real expressiveness is greater than machine-like exactitude. In particular, let there be no hurrying between the larger sections of a tune, and no failure to give due pause between verses. And, in the richer tunes of the part-song class, there are often reasons for slight variations of tempo, either as between contrasted phrases or at the end of major divisions. All such shadings are to be adopted only for clear reasons, especially such as would influence any judicious singer if the passages in question occurred in a song or a quartet.

Talking about these things brings us into the neighborhood of one of the most difficult topics in this subject on which to frame written statements. I refer to the difference in treatment in the

"giving out" of tunes before they are sung and in the playing of them so as to lead the singing effectively. Of course, when one is young at the whole business of organ-playing, he must do what he can, and he may be able to master only part of this special art at first. But, as he gains experience, he should make the treatment of tunes in these two ways a constant matter of study and experiment.

The object in "giving out" or "playing over" tunes is both to reveal as much as possible of the latent beauty in the tune and to instigate people to sing it, partly by creating a sort of musical mood or momentum in advance. Obviously, there is no one way to "give out" a tune. Sometimes - and for some tunes - it pays to magnify the broad solidity of the total harmony, perhaps using fairly powerful stops, though usually, I think, some of these should be reserved for addition in the actual singing. If the tune has marked shifts of style or phrase, these may well be shown by changes of registration. Many tunes, however, lend themselves beautifully to treatment as solos, the soprano being taken on one manual and the other parts on another. In places, too, it is helpful to accent a phrase in other parts than the soprano by putting it on another manual. The same tune should not always be "played over" in the same way, if it proves that different treatments really bring out more of its inherent character or beauty. I feel so strongly that the ingenious "giving out" of tunes is essential for exciting good singing and for bringing the organist and congregation into artistic sympathy that I feel like resisting the desire that is sometimes expressed to do away with the practice altogether. No doubt, in a church where the contents of the hymn book is not only well known, but sympathetically cherished, the tune does not need to be separately presented every time, and instrumentally. But my own experience is that an immense stimulus can be given by such setting forth, if it is done with full earnestness, as one of the signal opportunities of our church work. Through this playing one can convey much to the average member of the congregation that can be intimated in no other way. By it you can irresistibly impress your notion of both hymn and tune even upon the heedless listener. By it you can exert an almost hypnotic influence upon him that shall instigate him a moment later to join in the singing as best he can.

One of the ways in which some organists throw away this whole opportunity is by a hurried, perfunctory or apologetic me-



thod. They seem to say, "I know that this is of no use, or is a senseless waste of time, or is something to which no one will listen." They scrabble over the notes, often much more quickly than they expect any one to sing them, and with no obvious care for accuracy or expression. My own experience leads me to think that often it pays to "give out" a tune a trifle *slower* than the best tempo for singing. This often gives it a fullness of expression that it otherwise misses. But I should hesitate to try this with a congregation that I did not know and that did not know me. All I would emphasize is that it is in the enunciation of tunes as noble pieces of instrumental music that the organist has his chief chance to exercise an educational and inspirational influence upon the congregation. To throw this chance away by careless indifference is more than unfortunate - it is wicked.

If there is no one way in which tunes should be played over, there is surely no one way in which they should be played for the singing itself. Just what policy is to be magnified depends vastly upon circumstances - upon the resources of the organ, upon the player's readiness, upon the character of the tune and its familiarity to the people, upon whether you have the help of good leading singers in the choir, upon the setting of the particular hymn and tune in the service, upon the number of persons present, even upon the weather! My own conviction is that it is a great advantage if one is accustomed to lead a choir or a congregation with a piano, since that emphasizes certain features of firm rhythm and positive accent that are very useful in organ leading. In playing tunes for a congregation the organist is never to forget that he is set to be a leader, not an accompanist - except in the rather rare cases where the congregational song is remarkably strong and good. This does not mean that he is to aim at keeping a little ahead of the singers, or at drowning them out by a torrent of tremendous diapasons or blatant reeds. But it does mean that he must have some definite and solid notion of how he believes the particular tune ought to be sung, and that he shall make this notion so clear and convincing that everyone must fall in with it. A timid, hesitating method is "sure destruction." And a capricious, tricky, spasmodic treatment, especially as to the accent and tempo, is quite as bad. Of course, fumbling in melody or harmony is inexcusable, and brings quick rebuke in the reluctance of the people to trust themselves to one who plainly does not know his business. The volume of tone should be sufficient to give every person in the congregation confidence. but it is not desirable that it be very

loud all the time. The heavy stops should be reserved for points of climax.

Personally, I am strongly in favor of varying the registration freely to fit the progress of the words. But eternal alterations just for the sake of showing off the organ, or the player's dexterity, are silly. With some tunes, it pays once in a while to lead with the melody on one manual and the other parts on another, or even to throw out the tenor or alto thus. After the current of song is established, so that it does not need much control, it is often strikingly effective to alter the disposition of the harmony, putting the alto or the tenor above the soprano. Once in a while a real *obligato* melody above the soprano, or in the middle of the harmony, may be made to give a special touch of dignity. (I remember hearing Dr. Stainer do this in St. Paul's Cathedral with masterly effect - this was some twenty-five years ago!)

My experience leads me to believe that congregational singing is helped by the practice of giving a good, solid, continuous pedal support, which, as a rule, should be mostly *legato* within phrases. This gives something for every part to rest upon, and, in a way, generates the harmony. It is also important that the melody should be clear, distinct and connected within phrases. But it is not always best to cling to what is called "the true organ style," especially as regards *legato*. Particularly, if the tune has a good deal of rhythmic movement, some degree of "vivacity," as many of our best tunes have, do not be afraid to bring this out with snap and dash, even if it means a long series of *staccati*. A judicious touch of these is like the skillful crack of the whip in the hands of the clever driver. And if a congregation is sluggish and dull in its singing, remember that the "bite" of the reeds will often wake them up when no amount of diapason will move them.

Regarding various much-debated matters no absolute rules can be given. For myself, I believe in encouraging a congregation to sing in parts, rather than in unison; but often it is well to ask them to sing a particular tune in unison, or one verse among the rest. For myself, I believe that tempo should be varied to fit circumstances, yielding more or less to conditions. Generally, the more the people the slower the tempo, and you can get brighter renderings on a clear day than when the atmosphere is damp or "muggy." For myself, I think that great care should be taken that tunes be transposed so that the soprano does not run above E or E-flat. This is specially imperative on rainy days or when it is very hot. For myself, I believe that the organist and the minister



should get together over the list of tunes for every service, seeing to it that they are sufficiently varied, and that they are so chosen that the congregation's repertoire is kept progressive.

It happens that I have been placed a great deal where it was expedient to lead congregational singing by means of the organ alone. I have come to feel that this is a great opportunity, though it obliges the player to study strategy in the whole matter. I presume that I have been fortunate in the conditions provided. But I have come to feel that the thing is possible everywhere, and that it is really the test of whether one is an expert or not. I can say this all the more coolly, because I am far from being an expert player in general. But I can make average people sing. And if a player of so small a capacity as I can do this, then it follows that the great majority of organists can do the same, - or better.

I speak of this as a great opportunity for more than one reason. It is an opportunity to bring to popular view a good deal of the really superb music that is locked up in tunes. It is an opportunity by means of those tunes to give vitality and perhaps immortality to the hymns with which they are associated. It is an opportunity to engage a large number of people in the actual experience of singing that which is artistically and spiritually worth while. And, besides, it is an opportunity without rival to enlist popular interest in every other sort of church music, because it makes it belong to them as no other form of church music can. The radical trouble with church music as usually conceived and conducted is that it seems to be apart from the people, aimed to hit them from outside, exactly as is the whole range of concert music. But here is a type of church music that is emphatically theirs, one which can be made to grow up from within them, just as the old-fashioned type of chorus music did. My contention is that this alone supplies a sound foundation for the cultivation of other forms of church music. It is so important that it behooves really earnest organists to concentrate upon it every energy of their minds. So I say that the magnifying of the function of leading congregational singing so that it amounts to something is a great opportunity - one which should not be so generally missed as it is.

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*Cover picture of Dr. Pratt by courtesy  
of Hartford Seminary Foundation*

# “O God, whose voice is in the wind”

ERNEST K. EMURIAN

O God, whose voice is in the wind  
Whose law is carved in stone,  
We praise Thee for the varied ways  
We make Thy Kingdom known;  
For skills of science and of art,  
And every new design  
We use to sow the Gospel seed,  
To make all kingdoms Thine.

Let music fill the starry skies  
Like angel-songs of old;  
May all mankind, through these new gifts,  
The face of God behold;  
May we be worthy of the saints  
Who pioneered of yore,  
And preached the Word in many climes,  
To earth's remotest shore.

May airwaves be Thy lengthened arm,  
To show abroad Thy love,  
So we may learn to live on earth  
As the redeemed above;  
To spread the vision glorious  
By sermon, stage and song;  
Till all shall own the Christ as Lord,  
And all to Him belong!

Tune: ALL SAINTS, NEW

This hymn was written for the Dedication of the Protestant Radio and Television Center, Atlanta, Georgia, on Wednesday, January 19, 1955. It is printed by permission of the author.

The Reverend Ernest K. Emurian has written many hymns, compiled books of hymn dramas, writes a monthly column on church music in *The Pulpit*, and has recently embarked on a series of "Hymn of the Week" articles for some forty-five newspapers, daily and weekly, in Virginia and Carolina. He is the minister of the Elm Avenue Methodist Church in Portsmouth, Virginia, and is frequently invited to conduct hymn festivals and to speak on hymns.



# The Church Music Clinic

HELEN ALLINGER

FOLLOWING THE ALL-CITY Junior Choir Festival in Toledo, Ohio, in the Spring of 1954, six organists and directors met socially to review the benefits of such a project. After weighing and considering its value to the community of less than 400,000, an idea for educating musicians and lay-people grew to a sizable proportion, namely: that, we who had been privileged to study and prepare ourselves for the Ministry of Music in the Church, would agree to contribute one and one-half hours each week for a nine-week period twice a year to teach Church Music. Our purpose was three-fold: (1) this Clinic was to be non-sectarian; (2) to help those church musicians in acquiring technique, repertoire and confidence in performing their jobs; (3) to inform the laymen, including clergy and choir members, so that they might have a better understanding and appreciation of church music. We determined the dates of the Fall Term to begin nine weeks prior to Advent and the Spring Term to end at the beginning of Lent, thus leaving the instructors free to pursue their church schedule during the heavier seasons more or less unhampered.

Five of the above mentioned musicians, comprising both faculty and steering committee for the Clinic, set about preparing a syllabus explaining the subjects to be offered in this curriculum. An invitation was extended us by Glenwood Lutheran Church to use the facilities of the church and parish house for our program. We were delighted. Both Pastor and Church Council agreed to underwrite us for a generous amount. This was more than we had expected, but we gratefully accepted this offer and forthwith mailed and placed in strategic places handsomely printed syllabuses bearing a sketched set of organ-pipes with the Cross slightly obscured by our symbol. (We were stressing the Ministry of Music more than the Ministry of the Church.)

Our next step consisted in the selection of names of prominent people interested in bettering the music program of the churches in Toledo and vicinity. We invited them to serve as a Citizen' Committee on Church Music. These consisted of laymen, clergymen, four or five professional musicians, and our newspaper music editor, who has been interested in the "reform" of music in the city on a concert level. We had not *one* refusal.

Drawing upon the experience of those instructors who had

had a background of college teaching, we set up a curriculum, numbering our courses, and arranging systematic registration procedure. Four courses were offered: Fundamentals of Music (non-technical), Choral Conducting, Service-playing and Conducting from the Organ, and A Study of Hymns (non-technical). Of this group, the practical courses drew the largest registration in this order: (1) Choral Conducting, Fundamentals of Music, Service-playing, with the cultural Study of Hymns rating a low registration.

The Fundamentals course taught by DeRuth Sage Wright, a graduate of the University of Colorado and sometime teacher at that school of higher learning, attracted a varied group. The members of this class included among others the president of a whole-sale drug company, the director (Ph. D.) of a social-welfare agency, a church secretary, a book-keeper, an art student, a clergyman, a school teacher, and a student organist at the Greek Orthodox Church, who had never known the structure of a major scale nor had any idea that there might be logic in notation arrangement. During these nine weeks in the study of theory and ear-training (intervals) this class reached the point of the writing and understanding of major and minor triads. This term the class is continuing on into sight-reading - the original purpose of its organization for choir members. (A first term class has also started again.)

In the Choral Conducting class, a repertoire of ten easy anthems for the Church Year was assembled and sold to each member of the class, who, after assignment by the instructor, took them home to study for the following class session. It should be stated that we explicitly made mention of the fact the class participation was not obligatory. These who desired to audit, did so. This class attracted - as did the other classes - people from the city as well as from towns as far distant as forty-two miles. In a climate like this that is to be admired. We determined to give them the best possible anthems available, constructed on simple, melodic lines, and possessing good texts. Some of the anthems studied were Mark Andrews' "Lauda Anima" (unison), Clarence Dickinson's Easter anthem "By Early Morning Light" for mixed voices, a sixteenth century English anthem by Orlando Gibbons "O Lord, increase my Faith," a modern number by Vaughan Williams "Let us now Praise Famous Men" (Memorial Day), Goss' "O Saviour of the World" (Lent or Holy Communion), Bach's "Break forth, O beauteous, heavenly Light" (Christmas), Thiman's "Immortal,



Invisible" (General), Bitgood's "Hosanna" (Palm Sunday), etc. We proved to these students, some of them veterans in choir-directing, that good anthems of easy rendition could be pleasing and singable. They loved them and "sold" them to the choirs and congregations which they served. We were delighted that this class attracted directors from Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, United Brethren, Baptist, Church of Christ, Unity and Seventh-day Adventist communions. The instructor, Robert Gotwald, an inspiring teacher, and a graduate of Westminster Choir College, gave them thorough training in rhythmic patterns and hymn conducting before going into anthems. Many of the directors had never known the diagram for 4/4 meter.

The instructor in Service-playing and Conducting from the Organ, Grace Stout Erler, is a graduate of the School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. This class was composed of a group of shy and reticent organists. Except on few occasions, the instructor did most of the playing and carried it off very well, as was evidenced by the happy expressions on the students' faces emitting from her class. She literally "poured" repertoire into them. Only one of the fifteen members possessed a copy of Bach's *Eight Little Preludes and Fugues*, but had never played them, and none had heard of the *Liturgical Year*. Still, several are teaching organ and most of them hold church positions. So, as the instructor continued to play good, but moderately difficult and easy preludes and postludes, to write out simple modulations on the blackboard for them so that they might be able to "tie the service together," demonstrated how to play hymns correctly, and eventually showed them how to conduct anthems from the console, the interest for better program-building grew.

As stated above, the class in Hymnody drew the lowest registration. There were nine. And, strangely enough, no musicians. The teaching of this class was assigned to the writer, also a graduate of the School of Sacred Music at Union. With a large map placed before the class, she traced the locations of the origins of many of the earliest Christian hymns. However, because of the interest manifested by members in this class, she began with the hymns of the Old Testament, up through the Psalms and into the early Christian hymns of the New Testament. With these hymns the Liturgy could well be explained - and, even to those laymen of other communions, it lent interest. For example, the phrases on the *Gloria in excelsis* and the *Te Deum*, and of course, the Psalms, were pointed out to them in their hymnals. To those

of liturgical communions, it opened up completely new vistas to them to learn, for instance, that the *Gloria in excelsis*, the first Christian hymn, in its present form shows the expansion of the Christian Church under the Roman Empire. By singing these chants and hymns of the Greek Church, the Easter hymns of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, and explaining a bit of Church history, the martyrdom of the second century, and so forth, we managed to instill some appreciation for early hymnody. The second term began where the first ended, with the Reformation and will lead up through the present day.

This Clinic is a beginning in Church Music study on a systematic basis, and the people in Toledo are watching it with interest and curiosity. Since we are growing, we have decided to incorporate, for we believe in the future of the Clinic. The greatest amount of encouragement has been given us by our sponsors, our pastors and our students. When we refer to *pastors*, we do not mean to infer that we have the backing of the entire clergy. This is definitely not true. But, the five instructors have been invited to appear before the Minister's Association in a panel discussion. We are grateful for this opportunity.

#### EDITOR'S COLUMN

(Continued from page 4)

Undoubtedly, we should be pleased to note the extensive use of hymns in a program of this scope and importance. We are. But, it is a pity that those responsible for such a broadcast have not shown at least an interest in or passing knowledge of other than the painfully familiar.

Recently the Editor received a copy of the dedicatory service for the new Protestant Radio and Television Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The standard of their productions has been consistently high and deserves careful study.

J. William Jones, planning for the hymns to be used in various services which are a part of the Religious Emphasis Week at the University of Redlands, drew on the great treasury of hymns and tunes available in contemporary hymnals, and saw fit to include a hymn and tune published recently in this periodical.

Another pioneer in the field of hymns for broadcasting and television is Daniel Ridout, Sr., Director of Baltimore's Great Hymns Choir. His program of "Great Hymn Interpretations" contains much that would be classed as familiar, but many "newer" and less familiar, though highly reputable hymns.

# Henry Sloane Coffin

HUGH PORTER

AT A MEMORIAL service held in James Chapel of Union Theological Seminary on November 29 for President Emeritus Henry Sloane Coffin, the congregation sang with fervent spirit three great hymns which were favorites of Dr. Coffin's. Someone said that "the stirring singing of 'For all the Saints' to R. V. Williams' tune, *SINE NOMINE*, gave one the feeling that everyone in the chapel was expressing gratitude to God for the life of Dr. Coffin." An alumna of the School of Sacred Music wrote, "I should have loved to have been there in the chapel—yes—and I expect many saw, as I know I would have seen, a handsome, superbly unselfconscious figure processing down the aisle, hymn book under his arm, singing every word of every verse."

That is the way many graduates of the Seminary like to remember him. For he knew by heart practically every great hymn in the book and his singing inspired others to participate wholeheartedly also. He believed that one who has a vital religion is bound to know and love what is in the hymn book; that to have great hymns, we must have great Christians. When he saw a congregation of glum, silent people grow restless during the singing of four or five stanzas of a hymn, he believed that there was no real joy in their hearts as the result of an abiding faith.

While he was minister of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church and a trustee of Yale University he still found time to be co-editor of the book, *Hymns of the Kingdom*, which stood as a model of what he thought a hymn book should be. His was an "honest job of editing, for it gave credit where credit was due." As a rule it had the original words of an author: "We have introduced no changes into familiar hymns save in a few instances where we have restored the author's original text and substituted it for the altered form which editors have published."

Naturally the book revealed a "pastoral insight" coming from one who had been a minister beloved alike by rich and poor, humble and great. As one would expect, it was a scholarly book for the editors had "carefully examined several thousand hymns which had found a place in English speaking churches in the last 200 years." "We have felt that the older and the more widely used a hymn is, the more suited it is to common worship, and the better adapted to manifest and promote the unity of the Church of Christ." Dr. Coffin strongly believed in preserving the poetic form of the text and his hymnal has the complete poem



printed below each setting of the tune with the first stanza also inserted between the staves of the music.

When he came to Union Theological Seminary as President he brought his knowledge and love of hymns with him. It was therefore most natural that he should introduce into the curriculum a course in Hymnology which he continued to teach until his retirement in 1945. He has clearly defined the requirements of a good hymn and a good tune in the illuminating sixth chapter of his book, *The Public Worship of God*. As he taught this practical aspect of worship in the classroom he was able not only to define a good hymn and a good tune, but also to trace the history of the subject in the greatest detail with matchless wit and enthusiasm. One day he said, "For many years I have been trying to locate the source of the tune HAYDN in one of the quartets or symphonies of that master. Mr. Porter, do you know where that melody comes from?" "Well, I may have known, but if I have, I have forgotten it," came the lame reply. "If we only knew what Mr. Porter has forgotten we would be very wise people," came the quick rejoinder. From a less brilliant teacher the frequent thumb-nail biographies of author and composer could have become tedious. But there was never a dull nor wasted moment with him for his teaching was always enlightening and often spontaneously amusing.

Strangely enough some who knew Dr. Coffin with his breadth of knowledge, culture, sympathy and faith, were unaware of his interest in hymns and sacred music. But he, like Martin Luther, considered a knowledge of music an essential requirement for the pastor. It was he with Dr. and Mrs. Clarence Dickinson who conceived and made possible the School of Sacred Music at the Seminary. "How a minister can expect to conduct public worship effectively without a thorough knowledge of the spiritual contents of the hymnal in words and tunes . . . passes comprehension," he once remarked with feeling. Of Bach he said, "There was no more devout man in the pulpit in the eighteenth century than the scarcely recognized organist and cantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig."

His admonition to the present director of the School of Sacred Music at the time of his installation was: "Arouse your students in sacred music to evangelistic efforts to improve the taste and enlighten the minds of fellow theological students in good music." In Doctor Coffin's passing the church has lost one of its staunchest champions of great music as an ally of true religion.

# Thomas Kelly, 1769-1855

ALEXANDER FLANIGAN

WHATEVER THE AVERAGE churchgoer may know or care of the men and women who lie obscured behind the glory of their work in his book of praise, it is a tolerable assumption that those of that brotherhood of hymn-lovers - men who write, read and talk about hymns - will have more than a nodding acquaintance with the Irish hymnist whose centenary comes July 13. That some of his hymns are still of a respectable stature might be good and sufficient reason for thrusting him on the attentions of the hymn-lover at any time; if any warrant be needed for an unduly presumptuous literary enterprise in this year of grace it will be found in a curt announcement, addressed to whom it might concern, which appeared in the obituary columns of the Irish press just one hundred years ago:

May 14, 1955 at 12 Pembroke Place, Dublin,  
the Rev. T. Kelly, of Kellyville, Queen's County.

And that announcement must have concerned quite a few. His hymns were known and sung throughout the land; despite his unceremonious exit from the Church many years before, he had his friends in the Establishment; the Irish Famine was a memory of only six years, and many of those fortunate enough to escape its ravages - young men and maidens, old men and women in the chimney corner - must have remembered with gratitude the helping hand held out by "Mister Kelly."

To have his hymns sung for a century and a half were honor enough for any man. But Thomas Kelly had other claims on the Church. He set his impress on the shape of hymnic polity in the Church of Ireland during the transition from Tate and Brady, and - rarity amongst hymn writers - for years he furnished that Church with some of its tunes. Alas! These aspects of his labor are now a forgotten glory, and Kelly's last hold on the affections of the hymn-lover is nothing more than a handful of hymns which have withstood the changes of time and the vagaries of taste.

Thomas Kelly was descended from an ancient Celtic chieftaincy, the illustrious O'Kellys of Hy-Maine, who possessed extensive lands in the country. He was the only son of Thomas Kelly, a judge of the Irish Court of Common Pleas, and was born July 13th, 1769, on his father's estate at Kellyville in Queen's County (now Co. Leix). He was educated at Portarlington and Kilkenny, and in November, 1785, was entered as a pensioner at

Trinity College, Dublin. Here he was gold-medalist, and in 1789 graduated B.A. with honors. Family designs were that he should follow in his father's footsteps and become a barrister. Accordingly he was entered at the Middle Temple and proceeded to London to study law. Family designs were soon brushed aside, however. A study of the works of Romaine deflected his course; he returned home and took up theology.

In 1792 Kelly was ordained in the Church of Ireland, just nine years before the Act of Union which united the Churches of England and Ireland. But he met the Church at the ebb tide. It was still the day of plurality of parishes, non-resident clergy and hunting parsons. The Church was in a condition of spiritual torpor. Dissent was proscribed, and anything savoring of the evangelical was tantamount to Methodism. Kelly was an evangelical. He indulged in extempore sermons and prayers, and exhibited a missionary zeal little understood in the Church of his day. Eventually, with several of his fellow-clergy, he was reprovved by the Archbishop of Dublin, who forbade the Dublin clergy to admit any of them to their pulpits. Before the century was out Kelly relinquished an untenable position and proceeded on his way as an Independent. The temper of the times is neatly summed by his contemporary, Sir Jonah Barrington, who wrote in his *Personal Reminiscences*: "Judge Kelly's only son, while his father yet lived, turned Methodist; got infatuated amongst devotees and old women; became a sectarian preacher; and has by these ignoble means contrived, as thoroughly as the possession of a large fortune will permit him, to bring once more the family name into that obscurity whence his father had raised it."

At that time several of the leading Dublin citizens were holding meetings in private houses and other unconsecrated premises. Kelly took a leading part in some of these gatherings, including that at the home of the wealthy Alderman Hutton, a Presbyterian. In this latter gathering of the Countess of Huntingdon's supporters the famous York Street Chapel had its concept. Later, from his own fortune, augmented by that of his wife, he erected chapels in the counties of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Queen's County. At least one of his chapels is still in use as a place of worship.

Although he took little part in public movements Kelly let no opportunity pass to go the second mile. During the Irish Famine of 1845-49, in which a million people are estimated to have died from starvation, he rendered much service in the alleviation



of suffering, and one man is said to have cheered his wife with the words, "Hould up, Bridget; there's always Mister Kelly to pull us out of the bog after we've sunk for the last time."

The large-heartedness, meekness and utter simplicity of the man stand out in sharp contrast with scholastic and intellectual achievements. He was a man of high attainments in general scholarship and Oriental languages. A first-rate Greek scholar, he daily read the Scriptures in the originals. He wrote a little work, *Andrew Dunn*, aimed against Romanism, another entitled *Thoughts on Imputed Righteousness*, and a series of articles, "Reminiscences of the Church," contributed to a Dublin journal.

R. S. Brooke pays him the following tribute in his *Recollections of the Irish Church*:

He turned his back with sorrow on the Church . . . Still holding fast his friendships with his brethren of the Establishment, he rejoiced in their labours and sought to strengthen their hands . . . I saw him at Kingston (now Dun Laoghaire) when very old; he would come into my house from time to time, and sit at the piano and sing his own hymns. His voice was almost gone, but his face and manner were ever a sweet hymn to his friends. The last time I met him was at a clerical meeting at his son-in-law's the Hon. and Rev. Wm. Wingfeld, where the old man was staying. His conversation was most edifying - a descant on the wondrous love of God to all mankind, and how we should copy God, and love each other; and then at the close of the meeting he yielded to our united wish and, kneeling down, he prayed briefly, simply and fervently, that God would bless and prosper the word and work of us all, for Christ's sake.

It is usual to detach Kelly's hymns from their era and setting in appraising their worth. But they had a function apart from their inherent merit; they were one of the instruments employed in the transition from psalmody to hymnody in the Church of Ireland.

In 1801 the Irish Church was assimilated with the Church of England in the Act of Union. The Union continued for seventy years, when the Irish Church regained her independence in the Dis-establishment. In the Irish Church, as in the English, discontent with the Psalter as the sole vehicle of praise was growing. The Act of Union legislated "that the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the said United Church shall be . . .

as the same are now by law established for the Church of England." But in the English Establishment praise was in process of being reshaped; she, too, was in the throes of the transition, and had nothing to offer the sister Church beyond her example. Not till 1861, when *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was launched, did any earnest of unity appear, but by then the position in Ireland had crystallized sufficiently to preclude any influence from that quarter. The evolution in Irish Church praise was, therefore, motivated by collections of local origin.

In 1812 David Weyman issued his *Melodia Sacra*, containing 150 Psalms and ten hymns. These ten hymns marked the first serious threat to Tate and Brady. The popularity of *Melodia Sacra* prompted Weyman to issue a further three volumes, the *Sequel to Melodia Sacra*. In vol. I Kelly had three pieces, in vol. II, nine pieces, but vol. III was devoted exclusively to Kelly's collection of 1812, *Hymns on Various Passages of Scripture* - 125 pieces, complete with Kelly's tunes. The *Sequel* became the most widely used collection in the Irish Church, and remained so till 1873, when the first authorized book was issued. It was, therefore, a powerful medium in ushering in the new song, and gave to Kelly a representation in Irish Church praise far in excess of that of any other writer. In function Kelly was to Ireland what Isaac Watts was to England or William Williams to Wales.

Of Kelly's tunes little need be said. Co-existent with the *Sequel* were numerous collections, usually small and without music, calculated to meet the needs of individual parishes or dioceses. The lack of music editions necessitated much dependence on the *Sequel*, and Kelly's tunes thus gained a currency in excess of their intrinsic worth. They declined rapidly with the appearance of the *Irish Church Hymnal* in 1873, though seventeen hymns and five tunes were carried over. The current edition carries thirteen hymns and one tune - which latter appears to be the last remnant of the Kelly music. (CONFIDENCE, NO. 596)

What of the hymns themselves? Do any of them hold that mysterious something, that indefinable essence that imparts immortality to the hymnist's handiwork? Who can tell? for while the average man continues to choose his hymns with less fastidiousness than he does his dressing-gown or his dinner-jacket, there will always be that incalculable factor which evades the hymnologist in his last analysis.

Few will quarrel with the judgment of Louis Benson, illustrious name in the American field: "As a whole he cultivated

rather the commonplace, and over the area of his 765 hymns he beat it out to palpable thinness." Kelly wrote too much not to reach the depths. The bulk of his pieces are prosaic and commonplace. One of the first features to thrust itself on the reader is the lack of metrical variety, and here he will find the senses jarred by Kelly's appetite for the trimeter and the tetrameter, which recur with nauseating monotony and are nearly always iambic or trochaic. Faulty rhymes, too, occur with a frequency that constitutes a blemish. His diction is austere and utilitarian rather than ornamental. The arresting phrase or the majestic line seldom lends embellishment to his work. As a piece of literature the hymns are plain, but they are clear and unambiguous throughout.

It is essence and substance rather than literary considerations that redeem Kelly's hymns. In this aspect of their character they approach with respectable proximity the greatest of the evangelical hymns - those of Charles Wesley. They reveal nothing of the ultra-passion which called forth the Wesley hymns or the white heat which forged them; nothing of the impelling urge or the self-abnegation which consumed their writer; nothing of their subjectiveness or profound intensity; but, like them, they are laden clearly and emphatically with the theme of Christ and the cross. Kelly sings of little else. A sustained Gospel ring pervades the whole expanse of his work. His fervour is sober; it is, nevertheless, all-consuming. But if he reveals his faith he reveals little else of himself. The warmth of Wesley, the personal intensity of Cowper and the sentimentality of Faber are not there, though he strikes a more joyous note than Lyte and escapes the cold objectiveness of Heber. In current collections the present writer, in a search confined to those in his own possession, has traced seventy-two of his pieces, but in only three is there a line couched in the first person singular. Clearly, he is not the ideal hymnist for the quiet hour.

Kelly's first volume appeared in 1802, his last in 1853. His muse therefore ran its course in fifty-one years, with a total of 765 hymns - a prodigious number. And yet who will cast him, any more than he will Watts or Wesley, in the mould of John Berridge, who "took up the trade of hymn-making because a jingling employment was required which might amuse and not fatigue him." For there is sincerity in every line, a message for a godless age. Of the seventy-two pieces already mentioned forty are to be found in *Hymns of Light and Love*, and forty-one in the *Irish Baptist Hymnal*. Only a few of these are in constant use, but these few are good, and include "We sing the praise of Him



Who died," "Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious" and "The head that once was crowned with thorns."\* They have travelled around the English-speaking world, and several have been translated.

One thing we know of a surety - in quarters where the note of the cathedral organ is clearly distinguished from that of the penny whistle, the Christian Church will long resound to Thomas Kelly at his best.

\**Ed. Note:* This hymn has been described by Erik Routley as "perhaps the finest of all hymns" in *Hymns In Human Life*, p. 315.

## Hymnology: Handmaiden of Worship

RUTH ELLIS MESSENGER

"HYMNOLOGY," IN DICTIONARY parlance, "is the study or science of hymns, including their history, use and classification." Regarded as a merely factual study, it is a phase of the objective search for truth. Seldom, however, is any study pursued in this rarified intellectual atmosphere especially in an era when "applied science" is so often the ultimate aim of the investigation of facts.

In something of this scientific spirit, the late medieval and Renaissance commentators on Latin hymnody, who should be reckoned among the earliest Christian hymnologists, examined the hymn. Guided by the same principles which characterized the humanistic study of the Latin classics, Josse Clichtove, their most notable representative, annotated the office hymns with information on authorship, meters, language, sources and interpretation. As an element in worship, the hymn had had its definitive function for centuries and needed neither discussion nor initiation.

The evolution of hymnological studies in the European vernacular languages was a halting process and somewhat indeterminate. In the case of the English hymn, the serious study of documentary hymnology was postponed to the nineteenth century. Dr. Erik Routley, in "The Present State of Hymnology" (*English Church Music*, April 1950) has traced its beginnings and Mr. J. Vincent Higginson has provided the readers of *THE HYMN* (July, 1951) with an account of Daniel Sedgwick, a pioneer in the field. The efforts of Sedgwick and his contemporaries were motivated by very practical considerations. They wanted to learn about hymns and their authorship in order to understand them - but above all, to use them. Isaac Watts had established hymnody, apart from

psalmody, as an integral part of Christian worship in the free churches. The enormous influence of his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, (1707), in successive editions wherever the English language was spoken, pressed the frontiers of the hymn deeply into the territories of worship belonging to Protestant sects outside the Established Church, and ultimately within its very borders.

A century after Watts had published his first edition, the question was not "Shall we sing hymns?" but "What hymns?" For Methodism, the Wesleys had furnished a reply. The influential groups for which Watts and his contemporaries had written were well supplied; The Baptist congregations had compiled their own hymnody. As the Church of England responded to the same query, the talents of English churchmen, both lay and clerical, were freely spent in hymnic verse. What is more significant in the area of public worship, the compilation of hymnals, then taking place on every side, demanded a discriminative and selective process which the pursuit of hymnology in the modern sense alone could provide. Although it was impossible to agree upon the contents of a hymnal for a wide public in those early days, men like John Mason Neale, at the liturgical extreme, devoted infinite study and patience to the building of *The Hymnal Noted*, while James Montgomery, also a poet-hymnologist, was playing his part in the construction of an official hymnal for the Moravians. Interest in tunes as well as texts was inevitably associated with hymnal making as Thomas Helmore attempted to revive the Sarum melodies for *The Hymnal Noted* and the musician reformers of the period, like John Goss, W. H. Havergal, H. J. Gauntlett and other composers, were assisting in the composition of hymn tunes. One hundred years ago in England, the abundance and diversity of hymns and the enthusiasm with which they were recorded in hymnals, was apparently to be unchecked and unregulated.

A counter influence toward uniformity was soon at work, the final result of which was the appearance of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, (1861), with its successors and rival collections, adopted by large Protestant groups, irrespective of denominational barriers. The great promoters and editors who made these hymnals, from Henry W. Baker, W. H. Monk, Henry Twells, John Ellerton and S. A. Stone to W. H. Frere, Percy Dearmer and Ralph Vaughan Williams, in the very process of choosing hymns for worship, advanced and standardized hymnological studies. The Historical Edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, (1904), contained the harvest of hymnic gleanings from many fields. In Amer-

ica, as well as England, hymnals in the various denominational traditions began to appear, attracting in our day, greater interest as their true service to the organized worship of our churches begins to be evident. As soon as the actual scope and function of a hymnal was appreciated and the extent of editorial resources better understood, hymnody was linked closely to characteristic forms of worship within the various groups. If, for example, the seasons of the liturgical year were to be observed, the informed editor sought to enlarge and elevate congregational taste. The thesis is here tentatively offered, that the hymnals of the major Protestant denominations in the United States in the last one hundred years, have successively exhibited a progress toward finer concepts of worship.

The scope as well as the history of hymnological studies indicates the same trend. Within the present century, attributes of worship belonging to a number of national, or linguistic traditions have been recognized and welcomed by the hymnologist. Naturalized by translation into English, the hymnody of other modern languages has been introduced. Had we received only the German chorales with their musical settings, we would have been rich; the addition of the Welsh hymn tune and occasionally the text, has brought the ardent religious devotion of an entire people into our communal praise. It requires only a casual examination of any important recent hymnal in the English language to appreciate the debt we owe to the varied special traditions which the hymnologist has made available.

Our repertory of hymns, from every source has been so much enlarged since the days of Watts, with the corresponding necessity for study and appraisal, that the musical editors of a modern hymnal must be responsible for the relevance of the tunes selected to the primary objective of worship. A case in point, is that of the Gospel Song, which must be rejected when the tune, regardless of text, fails to measure up to the accepted standard.

No less may the hymnologist evade the theological issue which from the beginning has controlled and regulated the choice of hymns suitable for worship. It does so today. From the thousands of hymn texts which have been written since 1600, editorial censorship must select those consonant with the theological preferences of the group in question. At the crossroads of theology, Protestant worship tends to follow the inter-denominational path, and the Protestant hymnal tends to be in a sense, ecumenical. No greater obligation rests upon the hymnologist who is called to the



editorial function than this. Its urgency is measured by the layman's willingness to appropriate the theology of his hymns as an authentic expression of religious belief. Looking toward the future in the light of the past and the present, we may anticipate a greater degree and a fuller acceptance of ecumenicity in worship, as the outcome of our hymnal making.

As we observe the scope of modern hymnology in the departments of denominational, national, linguistic, musical and theological interests, which are involved in the hymnal for adults, what shall we offer to children? The worship needs of children and youth are being recognized as a vital consideration everywhere. To one who has not given this subject any attention, it may appear to be a simple matter to compile a hymnal for children's worship. The fact is, that no hymnal project requires a greater degree of specialized knowledge in the entire field of hymnology or greater sensitiveness to spiritual needs.

Hymnic diversification and its analysis in the last century might well have produced a formless although accurate body of textual and critical information, had it not been for Christian practice which has built the hymn into the structure of public worship, either as an integral part or at least an important ornament. This great functional principle has unified and elevated the study of hymnology and conferred upon it dignity and prestige. If all liturgy is of the essence of prayer, then hymnody must be conceived as a part of that act of devotion. In the achievement of his proper destiny, the hymnologist, held within the bounds of worship, is yet liberated to fulfill the chief end of man, - "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

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## Announcement

The one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Louis F. Benson, noted American hymnologist, will be celebrated this year. The Committee on Papers of The Hymn Society is happy to announce that The Reverend Morgan Phelps Noyes will write the anniversary *Paper*. We are asking our readers who can supply any letters, addresses or *memorabilia* regarding Benson, to communicate directly with Dr. Noyes, Central Presbyterian Church, Montclair, New Jersey.

## REVIEWS

Liemohn, Edwin, *The Chorale*. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa., 1953. No price quoted.

Dr. Liemohn is Choral Director at Wartburg College (American Lutheran Church), Waverly, Iowa. This book is an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation at the School of Sacred Music, Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

In the present book, Dr. Liemohn has given, within the space of 158 pages, what amounts to a rather rapid survey of the origin and development of the Lutheran Chorale. In addition there is an appendix, a very useful bibliography and index.

Seven chapters present chronologically seven areas in the development and impact of the Chorale. Beginning with the monodic and polyphonic technique in the early sixteenth century, several illustrations help to point up the transition into the Lutheran Chorale of the Reformation period. Each chapter considers Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Norway as separate sections, Denmark and Norway being combined until 1814, when, after the Napoleonic War, the great powers took Norway from Denmark and gave her to Sweden, thereby freeing Norway to begin her independent contribution.

Chapter two shows a further transition into homophonic and harmonic techniques as well as the influence of the organ and matters affecting congregational singing. The influence of J. S. Bach is merely alluded to. In Chapter four, rationalism, with its devitalizing effect on congregational music, is discussed, and in Chapter six there is the revival or recovery from

rationalism. In the last chapter, Chorale problems of the present are discussed with a final plea for closer unity between the hymn writers and composers.

Dr. Liemohn selects two specific German Chorales, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, and *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her*, and traces their development through the seven eras which began about 1524. There is not a great deal of new information presented however. A summary of the material on Luther's supposed hymn contributions from Groves' *Dictionary* appears in the appendix. On page 17, Dr. Liemohn goes further and states, "There is no serious question about his (Luther's) authorship of at least three melodies, those for the hymn *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her*, and *Jesaja dem Propheten das geschah*." As documentation for the first of the three, a reproduction of the melody is quoted from a booklet by Franz Horn, purported to have been in Luther's own handwriting. Because of the common practice of copying manuscripts of other composers in that day, we may well be inclined to disregard this as a primary source, however much we should like to think of Luther as author of both words and music. So far as the latter two melodies above are concerned, there is no supporting evidence given whatever for the contention that Luther may have composed the music.

One of the interesting points brought out is the observation by one Abraham Mankell, a Swedish historian, in which he claims that some of the early Swedish hymns were translations of hymns originally brought to

the continent by Norsemen at the time of the Vikings. These folk had settled in the area of Normandy and their hymn literature and music had been absorbed by the Normans. Some of them were later taken over by the Germans and now at the time of the Reformation came back to Sweden as German Chorales. Here again, one could wish to see musical examples, or at least the mention of specific titles in support of Mankell's statement, interesting as it is.

There is, in general, a good presentation and discussion of hymnals. Certain areas, however, seem to be rather sketchy. One case in point is that of Brorson, the Danish hymn writer, whom J. C. Aaberg calls the "Poet of Protestantism." (*Hymns and Hymnists of Denmark*. Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebraska, 1945, p. 89.)

The discussion from time to time of tempos and their effect on congregational singing is of interest, particularly when we contrast the four seconds per "beat" note with the present trend, as stated by Dr. Leonard Ellinwood in his recent book, *The History of American Church Music*. (Morehouse-Gorham Co., New York, 1953). Dr. Ellinwood says, "Nun Danket, Now thank we all our God, (and others) are frequently sung too fast to permit their recognition as chorales." (p. 168).

We read on page 147 with a touch almost of dismay, "there is evidently no correct 'version of the chorale.'" It would seem that if this is the case, there ought to be a real challenge for present-day scholars to establish what may be considered a convincing version for our day.

Dr. Liemohn deserves our thanks for writing a book which needed to be

written, and which now needs to be read and digested by all who are concerned with vital congregational worship.

—ROLF ESPESETH

*Our Songs of Praise*, compiled and edited by Edward W. Klammer. Harmonizations by Paul G. Bunjes. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1954. Melody edition, \$1.25. Full music edition, \$2.95.

An excellent work of 140 songs intended to be used for Kindergarten and Grades 1 to 4. The melody edition is meant to be placed in the hands of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders. The full music edition contains a metrical and alphabetical index of tunes and the names of authors and composers. Both editions are pinned with attractive musical notation and appear to be well bound to withstand hard use.

The work is based on the sound educational theory that young children can learn and will enjoy many of the tunes found in the adult hymnal. There is no encouragement here to teach childish songs and jingles which are soon outgrown and contribute nothing useful to the fund of worship material needed in later life. A careful examination of the book reveals an astonishing variety of tunes; plain song melodies, German chorale melodies, melodies from the Genevan and English Psalters, Welsh tunes, folk and carol tunes, and twentieth century hymn tunes. The melodies have been placed in suitable keys so that the voice range, in nearly all cases, remains within the treble staff. The harmonizations were made especially in the interest of children's voices, usually high on the keyboard. Many of them have dissonances and part leading which may not



disturb the child trained in modern music, but this reviewer prefers, for the most part, the harmonizations found in the adult hymnals.

As for the texts, there has been some modification to suit them to the child's level, making it necessary later in life to associate new words with some of the tunes learned. Which raises the question whether there are not enough great tunes wedded to simple words in the adult hymn book from which an adequate selection can be chosen to supply the needs of children so that the divorce of text and tune in later life will not be necessary. Such divorce is after all something of a painful process.

The arrangement of the hymns is according to subject matter, with emphasis upon the Church Year. The full edition contains a helpful schedule suggesting precisely which hymns should be learned (one each week) in the Kindergarten and each of the Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4. Another list of hymns correlates them with the Bible stories of the Old and New Testaments. There is also a helpful plan for the use of hymns in family worship and very sound suggestions for the use of hymns by children's choirs.

This work is not a miscellaneous collection of songs which children are supposed to like. The songs are carefully selected and edited with definite objectives in view and reflect the religious background and practices of the Lutheran Church. Other churches would alter the selections to some extent to fit their needs, and this reviewer would draw more heavily from the carols and folk songs which children everywhere love to sing. Yet *Our Songs of Praise* is ecumenical

enough in its selections to appeal to every denominational group except those who have given no careful thought to the importance of the songs which children are taught to sing.

—LESTER HOSTETLER

## NEWS AND NOTES

### *Student Hymn Contest*

All members of The Hymn Society received a folder containing "Five New Hymns for Youth by Youth." The hymns selected show that there is a good reason to hope for a contribution from the present generation of young churchmen to the universal treasury of hymnody. The Editors are interested in knowing whether any of our members have composed or would attempt to compose a new C.M.D. tune, suitable for use with J. Donald Hughes' text, "Creator of the Universe." The two tunes suggested are among the very few available in this meter, but neither is suited for these words. Tunes should be submitted to the Editor at the address noted on the masthead.

### *Choral Service in Atlanta*

The Choral Directors Association of Greater Atlanta sponsored a Choral Service of Worship on Sunday, January 30, 1955, with a distinctive selection of anthems. Dr. Federal Lee Whittlesey was the guest conductor. Anthems were grouped under the titles: "In the chapel of our forefathers," "From the musical worship of our neighbors," and "In the church of our contemporaries." A good selection of hymns was included in the service. The Central Presbyterian Church, in which the Service was held, publishes *The Central Chorister*, which is an outstanding monthly publication of its type. The February issue not only outlined the musical pro-

gram for the month, but presented some thoughts on the Church's every member canvass, relating to the choral program. Hubert Vance Taylor is the Minister of Music.

#### *Early Anthems to be Available*

The Commission on Church Music of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland has recently announced the reprinting of much hitherto unavailable choral music and services from the eighteenth century Anglican composers. As this represents considerable research and will prove of great value to all who are working in church music, a request for samples may be addressed to the Secretary of the Commission, Richard M. Babcock, 105 West Monument Street, Baltimore 1, Maryland.

#### *Encouraging Use of Hymns*

St. David's Episcopal Church of Austin, Texas, The Rev. Charles A. Summers, Rector, takes the hymnal seriously. Choir responses are largely taken from the hymnal. In the pews are folders containing the melody lines of familiar canticles. Extensive program notes about the hymns and music of the service have brought a response from the congregation in terms of increased interest and greater participation in the service.

#### *Hymn-Anthems Included in Program*

The Presbyterian Choir of General Assembly's Training School and Union Theological Seminary (of Richmond, Virginia), prepares a program for use on tour each year. The program for the present academic year includes a representative selection of anthems, spirituals, and carols, and also several arrangements of hymns. Dr. James R. Sydnor is the director.

#### *Davison Lectures Available*

Dr. Archibald Davison's series of

lectures, "The Background of Protestant Music," recently presented at Union Seminary in New York, are now available in mimeographed form from the office of the School of Sacred Music. Dr. Davison made use of a number of hymns and tunes in his illustrations, and was assisted by the seminary choir, under the direction of Dr. Hugh Porter.

#### *Editor in Hymn Festival*

The Editor participated in a Hymn Festival directed by Dr. Charlotte Garden at the Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church, Plainfield, N. J., on March 6; the Festival featured hymns in the Presbyterian Hymnal which were written by persons associated with The Brick Presbyterian Church of New York City. Among those present at the Festival was John J. Moment, D.D., Pastor Emeritus of the Plainfield Church, and himself author of hymns.

### Among Our Contributors

HELEN ALLINGER, D.S.M., Organist and Choirmaster of the Glenwood Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio, describes The Church Music Clinic of which she is the Dean.

ALEXANDER FLANIGAN of Belfast, Ireland, whose appreciation of Cecil Frances Alexander appeared on THE HYMN, April, 1954, continues his studies of Irish hymn writers with an account of Thomas Kelly.

HUGH PORTER, D.S.M., Director of the School of Sacred Music, Union Theological Seminary, has written of The Reverend Henry Sloane Coffin from an intimate association of many years, and an acquaintance with Dr. Coffin's work in hymnology shared by very few of his co-workers.



## PAPERS OF THE HYMN SOCIETY

- I. **The Hymns of John Bunyan**  
Louis F. Benson, D.D.
- II. **The Religious Value of Hymns**  
William Pierson Merrill, D.D.
- III. **The Praise of the Virgin in Early Latin Hymns**  
Ruth Ellis Messenger, Ph.D.
- IV. **The Significance of the Old French Psalter**  
Professor Waldo Selden Pratt, L.H.D., Mus.D.
- V. **Hymn Festival Programs**
- VI. **What is a Hymn?**  
Carl Fowler Price, M.A.
- VII. **An Account of the Bay Psalm Book**  
Henry Wilder Foote, D.D.
- VIII. **Lowell Mason: an Appreciation of His Life and Work**  
Henry Lowell Mason
- IX. **Christian Hymns of the First Three Centuries**  
Ruth Ellis Messenger, Ph.D.
- X. **Addresses at the Twentieth Anniversary of the Hymn Society of America**
- XI. **Hymns of Christian Patriotism**
- XII. **Luther and Congregational Song**  
Luther D. Reed, D.D., A.E.D.
- XIII. **Isaac Watts and his Contributions to English Hymnody**  
Norman Victor Hope, M.A., Ph.D.
- XIV. **Latin Hymns of the Middle Ages**  
Ruth Ellis Messenger, Ph.D.
- XV. **Revival of Gregorian Chant: Its Effect on English Hymnody**  
J. Vincent Higginson, Mus.B., M.A.
- XVI. **The Hymn Festival Movement in America**  
Reginald L. McAll, Mus.D.
- XVII. **Recent American Hymnody**  
Henry Wilder Foote, D.D.
- XVIII. **Hymnody in the American Indian Missions.**  
J. Vincent Higginson, Mus. B., M.A.

Copies may be obtained from the Hymn Society of America, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Papers I-XV, 25 cents each: Papers XVI — XVIII, 35 cents. Papers I, II, VI, VII, VIII, out of print.